

Drexel Hill, PA - They devote their free time to serve their communities while putting their lives on the line to protect local residents. Volunteer firefighters truly epitomize the “dignity of danger.” So said Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) at the Annual Awards Banquet of the Manoa Fire Company, held this evening in Drexel Hill. The Congressman also set the stage for an announcement that the company would be awarded a \$52,060 Assistance for Firefighters Grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

— “I’m honored to attend this gathering of the Manoa Fire Company and to award them this much-deserved grant,” Congressman Sestak said. “Every time I’m in the presence of volunteer firefighters, I’m filled with a deep sense of admiration. These men and women exhibit the ‘dignity of danger’ with their exemplary public service as they daily put their lives in harm’s way to serve their communities and protect their neighbors. They are twice the citizen, who not only have jobs during the day, but volunteer time to serve the public on their time off.”

The Manoa Fire Company, formed in 1925, is one of five volunteer companies serving the 50,000 residents of Haverford Township. In addition to providing fire protection, the company offers basic life support emergency medical services to the Township, splitting these services with Llanerch Fire Company.

Since taking office in January, Congressman Sestak has been an active supporter of both professional and volunteer firefighters. He recently cosponsored bipartisan legislation to provide tax relief for volunteer first responders. The legislation, the Volunteer Firefighter's Tax Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 943), would allow state and local governments the flexibility to develop beneficial tax incentives, including property tax abatements, retirement awards, death benefits, health benefits, and state income tax credits, for encouraging recruitment and retention for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel. Joe hopes that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and local municipalities will continue to work to provide their volunteer emergency responders with the appropriate incentives, rewarding them for the first-class service they offer the citizens of Pennsylvania. In addition, the Congressman recently introduced the Christopher Kangas Fallen Firefighter Fairness Act (HR 2224) to bring equity to fire fighter benefits, regardless of age or status as an apprentice or trainee. Christopher Kangas was 14-years-old and a junior firefighter in Brookhaven when he died in 2002 from multiple head traumas as a result of being struck by a car while answering a fire call on his bicycle.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in

Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.